Energy Efficiency Matching Grant Program for Affordable, Multi-Family Housing
Fall 2021 Round due Friday, October 1, 2021 at 5:00PM

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

1. **Where can I find the grant application materials?**
   All grant application materials and links are located on the Office of Environment and Sustainability website at the Energy Equity Programs page under the Funding for Building Improvements section.

2. **What is the total amount of grant funding available for the program? How much funding can I apply for?**
   The maximum matching award is $5,000 per building/project. A minimum of $80,000 is available for this program per calendar year. The City may elect to increase the total amount depending on availability of quality projects.

3. **Are buildings outside the city eligible? For example, buildings in Norwood, Forest Park, or Golf Manor?**
   This grant program is only for buildings located in the City of Cincinnati. One way to determine if your property is in the City is to use the Property Search tool on the Hamilton County Auditor's Website.

4. **Can an application include more than one multifamily property?**
   One building address is permitted per application. An owner can submit more than one application. Applications can be submitted that have multiple buildings only if the buildings are designated by the Auditor as having the same address.

5. **How do I check tenant income levels?**
   The way in which incomes are ascertained will likely vary depending on the building or owner. However, if you have the income of your tenants, please use this link and reference the column header for 200%.

6. **Is a one unit that is rented to a short-term rental operator eligible?**
   Tenants must be under a lease agreement for the unit they are renting. Short-term rentals are not eligible. This grant program is only for multifamily buildings and that is being defined as 2 units or more.

7. **Can the grant be used to add new electrical features in the units? For example, switch from boiler (owner paid heat) to tenant paid electric baseboard heat?**
   No. The grant funding cannot be used to shift the cost burden to the tenant. Project proposals must demonstrate net electricity energy savings for tenants.

8. **Are buildings eligible if there are a mix of tenants who are above and below the poverty threshold?**

    Yes. The building must have 50% or more of tenants who live at or below 200% of the Federal Poverty Level. This is determined based on monthly or annual income and number of people in the household. The higher the percentage of tenants in the building that meet the income criteria will be a factor in determining the award.

9. **Can I submit one application for multiple improvements? Or should I submit multiple applications for multiple improvements?**

    Each application is for one building address and that address and application can include multiple upgrades. The city will only match up to $5,000 per application.

10. **For the purpose of estimates, would projections based on cost per sq ft from a local company suffice, or would I need to have an in person quote provided by a representative?**

    Quotes and estimates are both acceptable for the purposes of this application as long as proof can be furnished in writing and uploaded with the application.

11. **Will I be eligible for the additional rounds of funding if I receive a grant this round?**

    Yes, owners are allowed to apply for future funding rounds for the same address and different upgrades as long as the prior grant is closed and completed satisfactorily.

12. **When will the next application cycle be?**

    Applications can be submitted at any time throughout the calendar year, but will only be reviewed and decided upon on a quarterly basis. See the City's Energy Equity Programs website for upcoming dates.

13. **Do all units need to be occupied in the building?**

    The building must currently have tenants at the income level. While not all units need to be occupied, the occupancy rate for those tenants that meet the income criteria will be a factor in determining awards. An unoccupied building undergoing or anticipating renovation is not eligible.

14. **What is the time period to do the upgrades?**

    Proposed projects are to be completed in a 2-3 month window post-award unless unique circumstances make that timeline unrealistic. Extensions may be considered on a case-by-case basis. See the City's Energy Equity Programs website for upcoming dates.

15. **With the current lag-time for new appliances, what happens if they are ordered and don't come in before the deadlines?**
    The grant timeline takes into account possible disruptions due to COVID-19. However, the Office of Environment and Sustainability will work with award recipients in the event of disruptions in the supply chain for materials and appliances.

16. **Once approved, what are the steps grantees should take to move forward?**
    Approved grantees will need to be registered as a vendor with the City of Cincinnati. Details for completing that process will be included in the award notification. Once the award notification has been received and contract signed and returned, the grantee should begin to implement their proposed projects. Grantees are responsible for all expenditure outlays to implement the project. Once the project is completed, grantees are required to arrange a site visit with the Office of Environment & Sustainability. Following a successful site visit, grantees will be required to submit receipts for reimbursement to the Office of Environment & Sustainability. After reimbursement receipt is confirmed, the grant is considered closed.

17. **How long will it take to receive reimbursements after updates are completed?**
    Payments are processed through the Treasury Office in the City's Finance Department. It typically can take 2-3 weeks to process the reimbursement request once approved.

18. **Will there be any retroactive reimbursements for replaced appliances?**
    No. The award can only be applied to upgrades that are made after award notification is communicated and before the close of the project window.

19. **Does installing solar panels qualify?**
    No. Solar panels are not eligible upgrades.

20. **Can I use the grant to add new electrical features in the unit?**
    The grant award will only reimburse those upgrades that are included in the Eligible Energy Efficiency Technologies document on the Office of Environment and Sustainability website. This grant program is for the purpose of reducing tenant electricity costs. If an unlisted upgrade is of interest, please discuss with OES staff ahead of submission of your application.

21. **Am I limited in approved contractors or vendors for the upgrades?**
    Proposals do not need to use City approved contractors for upgrades.

22. **What is the application selection process like to award the grant?**
    The grant review committee will evaluate all completed applications and proposals in accordance with eligibility criteria, program requirements, and funding preferences. The

goal of the committee is to review and decide awards within 2-3 weeks of each quarterly application deadline.

23. **Are there grant programs for individuals or families who rent single family homes?**
    Please visit the website of People Working Cooperatively at
    http://www.pwchomerepairs.org/energy-conservation to find out about their energy conservation programs for homeowners.

24. **If you have low income tenants in a multi-family building and the owner pays the utilities, would the owner be disqualified for the grant if they are already advocating for the tenants utility bills?**
    The grant requires tenants to be responsible for paying and have their Duke Energy electricity bills in their name.

25. **Can tenants be month-to-month (but have been stable for years) or only those with current leases?**
    The building must have tenants on a lease who are at or below 200% of the FPL and have their Duke Energy electricity bill in their name.